CHAPTER 8

TRANSPORTATION

Addressing the community-wide need for transportation improvement is usually one of the most challenging aspects of comprehensive planning. In suburban communities, the transportation system is often based on rural or small town development patterns, which are inadequate to serve the scale of suburban growth. Not only have suburban communities grown in population, but also driving patterns have changed, resulting in increased vehicle trips per household or business. Significant modifications to the street system, especially for larger roads, would typically require significant state funding and the participation of IDOT, which complicates local control over transportation. When local political and quality of life considerations are added to the technical difficulties in improving the transportation system, the prospects for making major changes to the system become quite remote.

The growth of the Barrington area is a classic example of suburban development outstripping the capacity of the transportation system. Three major highways, which carry significant local and through traffic, run through the heart of the village. These highways are 1) Hough Street (Illinois Route 59); 2) Main Street (Lake-Cook Road); 3) and Northwest Highway (Illinois Route 14). In addition to increased vehicular traffic, many residents outside the village use the Barrington Metra Station to access commuter rail service. This brings additional vehicular traffic into the heart of the community during morning and evening rush hour. The increase in automobile and commuter traffic has also impacted the environment for pedestrian and bicycle circulation, especially in the Village Center area.

While the deficiencies in the transportation system have impacted the quality of life in Barrington, making the improvements necessary to resolve these issues would drastically change the character of the community. The impact of major transportation improvements, such as road, on community character is too great to make these large scale projects realistic should be studied and solutions presented. Thus, the thrust of this Chapter is to identify incremental improvements to the transportation system that can be made within the constraints of the system, as discussed above. Toward this end, the following objectives and specific policies regarding mass transit, vehicular traffic, signalization, the local street system, bikeways, and pedestrian enhancements are established to guide future actions.

1. Hough Street and Main Street should not be widened.
2. The feasibility of various solutions for facilitating traffic flow on Hough and Main Streets, and elsewhere throughout the Village, should be explored.
3. The Village should work with Metra and the railroads to provide grade separated crossings where appropriate.
4. The Village should improve traffic safety wherever possible.
5. Establishing truck route restrictions in the downtown area during morning and evening peak hours should be explored.
6. Traffic should be slowed through residential neighborhoods by utilizing traffic calming techniques, and by increasing enforcement of warranted stop signs and speed limits in problem areas.
7. Measures to reduce the frequency of train whistles should be explored and sound buffers between residential neighborhoods and railroad tracks should be created where possible.
8. The need for additional bus service throughout the Village and to other suburbs should be ascertained, and new developments with a high concentration of residents and/or employees should provide access to transit facilities.
9. A continuous network of sidewalks throughout the commercial areas of the Village, and other areas such as pedestrian corridors to schools and institutional uses, parks and Village Center, should be provided to increase pedestrian movement. New developments should be encouraged to install sidewalks and bike paths within the site and to connect to existing sidewalk and bike path networks wherever possible.
10. Grade separated railroad crossings for pedestrians and bikers should be explored.
11. A village-wide bikeway system should be developed to connect group destinations and provide links to regional bikeways.

12. Pedestrian right-of-way crossings should be clearly indicated and strictly enforced at intersections throughout the village.
13. A comprehensive Village Center parking plan should be implemented to meet the needs of shoppers, employees, commuters and residents.
14. Public parking lots should be well marked, accessible, attractive and safe. Improved signage should be provided at underutilized public parking lots.
15. Reliance on driving for short trips should be reduced by promoting land uses and streetscape elements which create a bike- and pedestrian-friendly environment.
16. The Village should improve streets in a timely and efficient manner.

MASS TRANSIT

Through the support of mass transit as an alternative to automobile dependence for both commuting and trips within the Village, air quality in the Barrington area can be improved. Because of impending pressures placed upon the METRA station in Barrington by continued development in the region, it is the Village of Barrington's recommendation that the pursuit of alternative stops and facilities be inaugurated to the north and south of the Village on the Union Pacific railway. Access to either station by residents living north of the Village would be enhanced offering alternatives to the increasingly congested Village station. However, a study must first be conducted to determine the true necessity and appropriate location of a second Metra station for the Barrington area.

To reduce commuter vehicle traffic, it is the Village of Barrington's recommendation that PACE establish either contracted or direct services to a broader coverage area, especially to Tower Lakes, Lake Barrington Shores, Lake Zurich, Deer Park and South Barrington. Buses should originate and terminate at the Village Station only. The Village shall continue its efforts in providing affordable public transportation for the senior citizen population such as the Dial-A-Ride program and other similar programs.

The Village of Barrington opposes any attempt to provide commuter service on the EJ&E line. The EJ&E rail lines should be encouraged to move underground if commuter service is established.

VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

The volume of traffic, particularly on Main and Hough Streets, has been a major concern of Village residents for many years. A considerable amount of this traffic is regional in nature and therefore, significant improvements can only be achieved through regional approaches. To help alleviate the traffic problem on Hough Street, the Village of Barrington recommends that the Illinois Department of Transportation continue to explore the northerly extension of Illinois 53 beyond Lake-Cook Road.

Even with the completion of regional roadways, a heavy concentration of traffic will continue due to growth in the immediate area and the existing barriers to movement. Movement must be accommodated efficiently to serve existing businesses and to provide safe vehicular and pedestrian accessibility for Barrington area residents. Alternate traffic solutions including selected intersection and roadway improvements and routes should be explored and studied.

The Village of Barrington recommends that control of Main Street (Lake-Cook Road) within the Village limits are turned over to the Village.

The Village should ensure proper improvement and development of streets within existing and proposed subdivisions, including sidewalks, street trees curbing and drainage.

BY-PASS FOR ILLINOIS ROUTE 59

Illinois Route 59 is the primary north-south artery that travels through the center of the Village of Barrington. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has classified Illinois Route 59 a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA) and has recently completed a study which indicates the need for roadway widening to five (5) lanes, with improved turn lanes at all intersections. The Village is strongly opposed to widening the road through the downtown because of the tremendous negative impact it would have on the historic district, adjacent neighborhoods, the Village Center and the established infrastructure. The Illinois Department of Transportation has therefore sited an additional option in their SRA study, which is an Illinois Route 59 bypass that requires the development of a feasibility study.

Over the next two (2) years (1999-2001), the Illinois Department of Transportation, Lake County, Cook County and the Village of Barrington will be working together on the feasibility study, which is the first step in the bypass process. The study will analyze bypass options, which utilize both existing roadway facilities as well as new facilities for the relocated Illinois Route 59.

Once the bypass location is determined, the next steps include Phase I and Phase II engineering land acquisition, followed by construction. The funding mechanisms for this project have yet to be determined. The Village believes that a bypass of Illinois Route 59 will provide relief of local and regional traffic congestion, while preserving the viability of the Village Center and ultimately the Village of Barrington.

The Village recommends that Route 59 be divided into two routes. Hough Street will continue to exist through the Village Center, and the proposed Route 59 would then become the bypass as proposed in the paragraphs above.

TRAFFIC SIGNALIZATION

Future signalization may be warranted where two arterial streets intersect or where a collector street intersects with an arterial street (see Figure 8, Transportation Plan). Existing traffic signals, as well as any future signalization, should utilize the OPTICOM system for ease of ambulance and fire trucks in responding to emergencies.

Specifically, the following signalization improvements are recommended:

1. Install a closed looped signal system at Route 14, Lake-Cook Road and Route 59.
2. Install a signal at Main Street and Cook Street, at the railroad crossing.
3. An “all-red” pedestrian crossing cycle should be considered at Main and Hough Streets during non-peak hours.

COMPOSITION OF THE LOCAL STREET SYSTEM

In order to work toward the overall mission of limited growth and low intensity of development, these recommended street system improvements are purposely geared toward local traffic.

Applebee Street

To help improve accessibility to the Village Center for local residents, it is recommended that Applebee Street be extended southward from Main Street to Station Street. It is recommended that the alignment of Applebee Street be extended northward and should include a below-grade or above grade pedestrian crossing at the Union Pacific railroad tracks to connect with West Liberty Street. A southward extension of Applebee Street should be considered, with vehicular impacts on residential neighborhoods mitigated.

Lake Zurich Road

Lake Zurich Road between Northwest Highway and Cuba Road should be viewed as an element of a collector street system maintained and improved through an intergovernmental agreement. However, the existing intersection at the curve in Northwest Highway is unsafe due to poor sight lines. It is recommended that an improvement to the intersection of Lake Zurich Road and Northwest Highway be considered.

Lake Zurich Road should be extended south and then west to connect to Valencia Avenue, as proposed in the Global Traffic Plan approved as part of the Barrington Senior Living Project. Pedestrian and bike path

improvements, as well as rehabilitation of the street should be added to the section of Lake Zurich Road between the Flint Creek Bridge and Cuba Road. Traffic "calming" devices, such as a turnabout (circle) should be considered where appropriate.

Route 14
Route 14 is a Strategic Regional Arterial (SRA). A pedestrian pathway and green space buffer should be encouraged along this route, as well as the provision of pedestrian connections. The burying of utilities and appropriate street tree installation should also be encouraged.

BIKEWAYS

The 1997 Barrington Bikeway Study identified "a strategy for the planning and construction of marked bikeway routes throughout the Village. The Village currently has a total of 0.5 miles of bikeways, none of which are marked. The study identifies approximately 13 miles of new bikeways, which would create a network of safe facilities throughout the Village's roadway network. The Village is currently in a position to provide a bikeway system without large amounts of reconstruction and right-of-way acquisition costs. The bikeway facilities provided are off-street bike paths, on-shoulder bike lanes, on-road signed and striped bike lanes, and on-road signed bike routes. The plan is to provide a network of bikeway corridors to encourage bikeway use for the casual user, children, adults and the experienced bicyclist."[2]

The overall goal of the Bikeway Plan is to provide a system of bikeways throughout the Village to fulfill the following community needs:

1. Recreational activity;
2. Provide connections to important community facilities, such as schools, park lands, forest preserves, transit facilities, and residential, commercial and office destinations;
3. Provide connections to regional bikeway facilities, such as the County Bikeway System and adjacent bikeway systems;
4. Providing an alternative transportation mode; and
5. Provide safe bikeways and ensure adequate signage.[3]

Construction of such a bikeway network would facilitate the connection of Barrington to a system of 100 miles of existing and proposed bikeways in Lake and Cook Counties. These bikeways are planned to meet federal and state safety guidelines, and are indicated in Figure 7, Transportation Plan. These bikeways should be implemented, along with a publicity effort to encourage their utilization.

PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENT

In both commercial and residential areas, pedestrian accessibility and safety conditions need improvement. "Pedestrians have the right-of-way" is a well-known axiom but it must be translated into design elements in order to change the behavior of the typical driver. In order to provide drivers with the proper design message, this plan recommends that wherever possible, the material of which the public sidewalk is made extend across driveways, driveway aprons and local streets. This would result in pedestrian path materials continuing uninterrupted across curb cuts and intersections in areas where pedestrian movement is of foremost importance.

A number of other small-scale improvements can help reduce conflicts between pedestrians and cars. For example, pedestrian crosswalks should be striped, colored and ADA compliant to alert vehicles of pedestrian use. Signs at appropriate Village approaches should be erected alerting drivers of the need to yield.

Within residential neighborhoods, a variety of traffic devices may be taken into consideration to slow traffic into the residential area, to discourage through traffic, and to increase safety for pedestrians, particularly children at play or on their way to school. Also, any new development should provide sidewalks.

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[2] Barrington Bikeway Study (draft), TransSystems Corporation (November 1997).

[3] Barrington Bikeway Study (draft), TransSystems Corporation (November 1997).

Additionally, in keeping with the recommendations included in the Village Center Chapter of this plan, the following recommendations are incorporated to further emphasize the need for pedestrian awareness:

1. A pedestrian and vehicular linkage across the Union Pacific tracks is recommended at Applebee to encourage safer pedestrian movement in the area.
2. All four quadrants that make up the downtown area should be effectively linked together with pedestrian pathways.

VILLAGE CENTER TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

The Village Center is a unique part of Barrington and has special needs with respect to transportation. These special needs focus primarily on parking facilities and pedestrian/bicycle circulation. The key objectives related to Village Center transportation needs are outlined below.

1. Utilize innovative parking solutions, including structure parking, to help maximize the potential of the Village Center.
2. Promote the "Village Rail Walk," a pedestrian promenade along the railroad right-of-way.
3. Create a system of pedestrian and bicycle routes that effectively connects the Village Center to surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Improved Pedestrian Linkages

A railroad walkway following the railroad tracks could be utilized to attract retail shoppers to areas off of Main Street as well as Hough Street. Pedestrian walkways from Special Planning Area 1 to the Jewel and the Icehouse would be most effective as well as a walkway into Langendorf Park. The Village should contact Metra and/or Union Pacific Engineering Departments as soon as possible to get cost estimates to see how much they are willing to pay towards pedestrian crossings (above and below track level). Signage should be introduced into the Village indicating pedestrian crosswalks. Connections to walkways from outside the Village should be encouraged from the neighboring residential areas.

Key areas for improvements are:

1. Pedestrian underpasses along the railroad tracks in the area of the Jewel, the park and the Icehouse. Improved walkway from the train station to the South Cook Street shops and Main Street.
2. Railroad/Pedestrian walkway.

Improved Bike Access to the Village Center

The existing bike path program, currently underway, should be encouraged and extended through out residential neighborhoods, provided that the locations are not detrimental to the neighborhoods and the design takes into consideration the needs of the residents as well as the Village's desire to link existing bike routes. Design of the bike routes shall also take into consideration the need for public safety and public use. It is recommended that benches and bike racks be installed wherever feasible.

Specific issues for improved bike accesses are:

1. Bike racks and benches in the Village Center.
2. Extensions of existing planned bike paths into residential areas and open spaces.
3. Clear indication at all intersections of the existence of a bike path.
4. A Bike to Retail program should be encouraged.

MASTER SIDEWALK PLAN

The Village Public Works Committee has endorsed a Master Sidewalk Plan for the entire Village, which encourages pedestrian linkages throughout. The plan identifies corridors for developer installation or contribution and sets priorities for other sidewalk extensions and installations.